

U.S. General Services Administration (GSA)

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION KEY ISSUES INFORMATION PAPER

SUBJECT: *Making it Easier for Suppliers to work with the Government*

1. BACKGROUND:

a. General Background:

- Throughout 2016, GSA was on a mission to make the agency more efficient, innovative, and effective. GSA's groundbreaking new Making It Easier (MIE) initiative proved to be a big step toward fulfilling those goals.
- MIE is a series of programs designed to provide start-ups, small businesses, and other government suppliers with the tools and support they need to do business with the government. It also helps new and innovative companies to join GSA's Multiple Award Schedules (MAS) program faster.
- The MIE Vision:
 - Companies can do business with the government with as little burden and delay as possible
 - Well-designed technical interfaces allow vendors/ suppliers to register, update information, and interact with the government easily.
 - Small businesses have the tools and support that they need to be successful when working with the government.
 - To ensure vendors understand the procurement process and know how to seek business with the government.
- Some of the key MIE initiatives launched throughout FY2016 include:
 - **Small Business Forecast Tool** - This web based search tool, co-developed by FAS and the Office of Small Business Utilization (OSBU), makes it easier for small businesses to find upcoming federal contracting opportunities around the world. Users can filter contracting opportunities by agency, award status, location, the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) code and contract value.
 - **IT Schedule 70 Plain Language Roadmap** - explains the offer process in plain English, and provides step-by-step instructions on how to successfully navigate it
 - **MAS Quickstart Guides** - short, simply written, introductory explanations of how to use specific MAS contract vehicles. The first Quickstart Guide explains the Electronic Contract Offer (eOffer) process.
 - **The Springboard program** - The Startup Springboard makes it possible for emerging startups to be included on IT Schedule 70 sooner and deliver their products and services into the hands of federal agencies faster than ever before.
 - **IT Schedule 70 FAST Lane** - Proven through a successful pilot, IT Schedule 70 FAST Lane drastically cuts the time it takes to get new, innovative IT vendors on Schedule 70. And once you're on Schedule, FAST Lane makes it easier and faster to make changes to a contract.
 - **MAS Welcome Package** - Our improved stakeholder outreach program is set in motion the moment a new company is awarded a Schedule contract. They now receive a standardized MAS Welcome Package, putting an end to the possibility that first time vendors could be sent inconsistent or outdated guidance. Each package

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provides new awardees (regardless of program) with clear, consistent, and up-to-date award information (including a detailed contract summary of terms and conditions).

- In October 2016, GSA published the first Making it Easier to Work with the Government Quarterly Report - <https://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/252215> - that provides additional details and specific links to all MIE initiatives.
- Federal Acquisition Service is committed to driving MIE initiatives forward in FY2017 in collaboration with the Office of Small Business Utilization, Office of Government-wide Policy, and Technology Transformation Service. To ensure transparency around progress of this initiative, these teams will continue to publish Quarterly MIE Reports capturing impacts of already implemented initiatives and charting the path forward.

b. Issues:

- GSA launched a range of MIE initiatives in FY2016. It will be important to monitor performance across the full suite of efforts, collect data, conduct rigorous analyses of results, and implement course-corrections as needed.
- Some of the MIE efforts include longer-term regulatory proposals and pilots, including Transactional Data Rule, Formatted Product Tool, and Order Level Materials guidelines. While initial feedback and implementation data (where available) suggest uptake in line with plans, it will be important to continue dialogues with industry, across GSA offices, and with agency partners.
- MIE initiative offers promise of a deep transformation to facilitate collaboration between industry partners, GSA, and agencies across the government. In FY2016, GSA kick-started deliberate and concerted progress on a number of initiatives. However, it will be critical to continue uncovering new challenges and putting new waves of transformative initiatives into practice at regular intervals (for example, MIE initiative's tranches 1 and 2 launched in April and October 2016, respectively).

2. SCOPE AND EFFECT:

a. Impact on GSA's customers:

- For **businesses**: MIE is explicitly designed to decrease administrative burdens on companies, clearly spell out requirements, identify practical ways for companies to request assistance (email, phone, and real-time chat), and share information about best practices and effective ways to collaborate with the Federal government.
- For **small businesses**: MIE provides opportunities for young innovative companies (especially, in technology-related sub-sectors, such as health IT, cybersecurity) to join GSA Schedules faster and have greater visibility in terms of emerging opportunities across Federal agencies. t.
- For **taxpayers**: By increasing competition in emerging sub-sectors (e.g. health IT) and connecting agency buyers with innovative agile companies, GSA aims to develop

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effective lower cost solutions across its offerings, helping Federal government make achieve its missions, while generating tangible savings.

3. ACTION(S) PLANNED OR REQUIRED:

- Continue regular (every 4-6 weeks) leadership-level alignment around implementation of MIE initiative via the Initiative Leadership team chaired by FAS Commissioner and MAS Transformation Office:
- Track progress across MIE initiatives launched in FY2016, particularly focusing on TDR and FPT adoption, average days to get on IT70 Schedule (FASt Lane), types and numbers of innovative companies leveraging the Springboard program, number of agencies posting opportunities via the Small Business Forecast tool etc.
- Continue design, user testing and implementation planning for subsequent tranches of the MIE initiative, including the following potential initiatives:
 - Simplify solicitation content for the Professional Services Schedule
 - Develop a MAS-wide Plain Language Roadmap
 - Explore informational resources for vendors interested in joining the GSA Schedules program
 - Consider streamlining the financial responsibility determination process
 - Assess options for re-designing the past performance determination process:
- Ensure publication of Quarterly MIE Reports to document progress and provide visibility into upcoming MIE efforts.

4. KEY STAKEHOLDER INTEREST:

- Senior Procurement Executives and acquisition professionals across agencies – information about new major rules (e.g. TDR), GSA rules (e.g. OLM) and offerings (e.g. Health IT companies offering services through GSA Schedules)
- Congress – GSA positioned its Quarterly MIE Report as a summary document for taxpayers, industry and Congress; GSA is open to continued engagement and feedback as additional MIE initiatives come online, and GSA generates data about implementation of the previous tranches.
- Industry - current suppliers and potential vendors, including business of all sizes to leverage the growing number of MIE programs and initiatives.

5. FISCAL YEAR 2017/2018 BUDGET IMPACT:

- MIE initiative relies on broad cross-functional collaboration across GSA offices under the overall leadership of MAS Transformation Office.
- No incremental impacts are anticipated; however, successful MIE advancement will require continued funding for MAS Transformation, Customer Experience, OGP acquisition, TTS acquisition, and FAS CAR teams.